

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The present amendment is being filed under a Certificate of Mailing.

Claims 6, 7, 14, 15, and 20-31 remain pending in the present application. Claims 6 and 14 have been amended. No claims have been added or canceled.

§102 Rejection

Claims 6 and 7 have been rejected as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) by U.S. Pat. No. 4,204,531 to Aginsky (“Aginsky”). Independent claim 6 includes the limitation that “one of said first component and said second component defines a void and wherein said other of said first component and said second component comprises a protrusion for cooperation with the void, such that the protrusion extends into the void.” Aginsky does not disclose such a void. The Examiner points to FIG. 3, stating that when the sheath 6 is extended, a void is created. However, there is no protrusion that extends into the void to cooperate with the void. For at least this reason, claim 6 and its dependents are believed to be allowable over the prior art.

§103 Rejections

Claims 20-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over the combination of Aginsky and German Patent DE3630069 (“Parhofer”). Claims 20-26 all depend from claim 6 and therefore include the limitation that the protrusion extends into the void and cooperates with the void. In order to prove a *prima facie* case of obviousness, each and every claim limitation must be met by the prior art. As stated above, Aginsky does not disclose a void as recited in claim 6. Furthermore, the Examiner concedes that Parhofer does not disclose such a feature (see page 5 of the August 8, 2006 Office Action). Therefore, none of the references disclose each and every limitation of the claims.

Claims 14, 15, and 27-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being obvious over Parhofer in view of Aginsky. Claim 14 has been amended to recite that the protrusion extends into the void. As stated above in reference to claims 6 and 20-26, neither Parhofer nor Aginsky disclose such a void. Therefore, for at least those same reasons, claims 14, 15, and 27-31 are believed to be allowable over the prior art.

Conclusion

For the above-described reasons it is respectfully submitted that the rejections of claims 6-7, 14-15, and 20-31 have been overcome and are currently in condition for allowance. Early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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